

REMARKS

Claims 1-63 remain pending. No claims have been added or amended. All claims remain the same. Reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the courtesies extended to the undersigned during the telephone interview of September 11, 2002, pursuant to which the above-mentioned Office Action was sent.

Claims 1-63 stand subject to a restriction requirement. The claims have not been grouped; however, patentably distinct species in the application were grouped as follows according to the figures:

Group 1: Species I: Figures 1-117

Group 2: Species II: Figures 118-131

Group 3: Species III: Figures 132-139

Group 4: Species IV: Figures 140-143

Examiner stated that no claims are generic. Examiner further requested selection of only one subspecies for prosecution of the claims. Examiner suggested an exemplary subspecies might be a subcombination of one nut, one bolt, one cup, one rod, etc.

Applicant hereby elects the subject matter of Group 1, and specifically the subspecies of a flanged ball-and-socket nut assembly comprising a longitudinally split-nut, a flanged elongated concave socket, and a threaded shaft having tissue retaining means at one end. Claims 1-4 and 50-55 are drawn to the elected species.

Applicant respectfully submits that the present claims are in form for allowance and a notice of allowance thereof is requested. Applicants request that this response be fully considered and entered into the record.

Respectfully submitted,

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Docket No. JST-15

REMARKS

Claims 1-63 remain pending. No claims have been added or amended. All claims remain the same. Reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested.

Applicants hereby withdraw the prior election of species and subspecies.

Claims 1-63 stand subject to a restriction requirement. The claims have not been grouped; however, patentably distinct species in the application were grouped as follows according to the figures:

Group 1: Species I: Figures 1-117

Group 2: Species II: Figures 118-131

Group 3: Species III: Figures 132-139

Group 4: Species IV: Figures 140-143

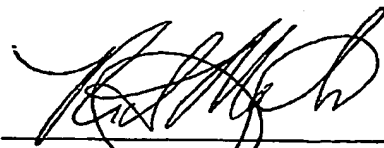
Examiner stated that no claims are generic. Examiner further requested selection of only one subspecies for prosecution of the claims. Examiner suggested an exemplary subspecies might be a subcombination of one nut, one bolt, one cup, one rod, etc.

Applicant hereby elects the subject matter of Group 2 (Species II), and specifically the subspecies of a suture nut. Claims 42-44 are drawn to the elected species. Claim 42 is generic to the embodiments of Figures 118-131.

Applicant respectfully submits that the present claims are in form for allowance and a notice of allowance thereof is requested. Applicants request that this response be fully considered and entered into the record.

Respectfully submitted,

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